

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTRACTING EQIP CONSERVATION ACTIVITY PLANS

1. **(Field Office)** – A producer is interested in EQIP-FA initiative to fund CAP development using producer-hired TSP, and completes application for program participation (CCC-1200). The producer establishes records at the local Farm Service Agency office. If the producer has already established records, they should update if needed.
 - a. NRCS field staff completes all program eligibility determinations. If client is eligible for program participation, proceed to the following steps:
 1. Determine payment rate for CAP from the Program Payment Schedule.
 2. Review with producer the CAP initiative payment rate and the TSP hiring process that she/he must use to hire a TSP certified in “TechReg” for the CAP for which they are applying.
 3. For Nutrient Management Plan and CNMP CAPs, inform client they will need to get soils samples and tests for all fields. Tests must be run by the University of Maine Soil Testing Lab, or another lab that will run the test using the MODIFIED MORGAN Method.
 - b. If the producer wishes to proceed, Field Office (FO) will:
 1. Provide producer with an EQIP application Form CPA-1200 to complete and submit. In addition, a copy of the current 1202 Appendix will be provided to the producer for their review.
 - c. If the producer submits the completed application, the FO will:
 1. Enter application into ProTracts and re-check eligibility and set application to Eligible if applicable.
 2. Screen application with the Maine NRCS Pre-screening worksheet.
 3. If application is a “High Priority”, Rank application and hold until ranking period deadline.
 4. If chosen by SO for funding, contact participant to notify producer of application preapproval.
 - d. If producer wishes to enter into NRCS EQIP contract, FO will:
 1. Develop EQIP CAP contract for producer.
 2. Provide producer copy of the CAP Criteria document from Section III of Maine’s eFOTG which lists required deliverables for the CAP.
 3. Notify client to hire TSP certified in Maine for the type of CAP being contracted from TechReg at: <http://techreg.usda.gov/CustLocateTSP.aspx>
 4. Client may provide farm information to TSP directly, or may grant permission for release of information to TSP by NRCS. If client agrees to release information, assist client to fill out and sign “Authorization and Release of Information” at <http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=26871.wba> . On the form, print TSP name and their TechReg ID Number TSP-X-XX-XXX. Place original signed copy in file and provide two copies to client (one for TSP).
 5. Provide client and/or TSP (if client has signed permission to NRCS to provide copies to TSP) copies of Common Land Units (CLUs) and “At-Risk” Wildlife maps covering CLUs.

2. **(Client, TSP and Field Office)** – Client contacts TSP and considers using the Assignment of Payment.
 - a. Client and TSP agree on terms. It is suggested that client have a contract with the TSP that refers to the CAP Criteria document which details the deliverables.
3. **(TSP)** – TSP will visit property.
 - a. TSP will make on-site visit, and get client-TSP contract signed (if parties have agreed to have a contract), and a copy of the “Authorization and Release of Information” from step 1(d)(4).
 - b. TSP completes necessary walk-over of land and gathers other information to complete the CAP.
4. **(TSP)** – TSP completes the CAP.
5. **(TSP/Client)** – TSP completes certification statement on Cover Sheet of CAP.
 - a. Two hard copies of CAP, Cover Sheet with signatures of TSPs and Clients, Certification Statement and invoice. These copies are left with the client.
 - b. TSP also produces two digital copies of CAP and leaves both copies with client.
 - c. TSP provides invoice to client for CAP.
6. **(Client)** – Delivers documents to Field Office:
 - a. One hard copy and one electronic copy of CAP, Cover Sheet with signatures and Certification Statement and invoice.
7. **(Client and Field Office)** – Payment request.
 - a. NRCS employee reviews deliverables using checklist for CAP from Section III of Maine’s eFOTG. Using the checklist includes verifying that the person that signed the Cover Sheet is currently certified in Maine for the type of CAP developed. If CAP has all required items, NRCS employee develops a CPA-52 for the CAP. NRCS employee when signing checklist, signs acceptance line on Cover Sheet of CAP. If CAP does not have all required items, contact Assistant State Conservationist for Special Projects. If CAP has all required items, Field Office staff prepares NRCS-CPA-1245 for client’s signature and processes payment.
 - b. Completed NRCS-CPA-1245 is scanned into contract payment folder on Field Office Shared Drive.
 - c. NRCS employee or Program Assistant sends email to Caren Roy, Financial Technician with a copy to Marcia Fair, State Office Program Assistant stating that payment is ready for second level review (i.e., mail will contain the following):
 - Client’s Name
 - Contract Number
 - Primary TSP
 - If applicable, Secondary TSP

8. **(Field Office)** – CAP processing.
 - a. One hard copy of the signed CAP and Cover Sheet with signatures and Certification Statement and invoice is placed in NRCS/SWCD official files.
 - b. The Toolkit customer folder is checked out from the NCP Database and the CAP digital file is placed into C:\Documents and Settings\<your name>\My Customer Files Toolkit\<Customer Folder>. Create a new folder named CAP in this location named and paste the CAP document(s) into it.
9. **(State Office)** – Tracks TSP completed actions and perform Quality Assurance on reported CAP per policy.

Contact. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Christopher Jones, ASTC for Special Projects at 207-990-9563 or email chris.jones@me.usda.gov.